

Board of Trustees Meeting

MINUTES

20th February 2023, 6 – 8:10pm

Via zoom

Present:

Andrew Brabban (Chair) (AB)
Adrian Dean (AD)
Helen Butters (HB)
Jonathan Clay (JC) - arrived 18:20pm
Nicola Daniels (ND)
Theresa Pass (TP)
David Parkinson (DP)
Avarni Jagpal (AJ)
Christina Neuman (CN)
Sharon Conlon (SC) – left early
Barry Brennan (BB)

Apologies:

Andrew Leahy (AL) – resignation received
Sam Ruck (SR)

Mentioned in minutes:

Service Effectiveness Group (SEG)
Financial Sustainability Group (FSG)
Internal Governance Group (IGG)
Gary Wildgoose (GW)
Initial Contact Team (ICT)

1: Introductions, Apologies & Conflicts of Interest:

Apologies sent from SR.
Apologies and resignation of AL announced by AB.

No conflicts raised in this meeting.

2: Minutes & Action Log from previous meeting:

Minutes 21.11.22 - The minutes of the Trustee Meeting of 21st November 2022 were checked for accuracy. No comments or adjustments, all agreed that the minutes were accurate.

Action: CN to send over to AB for signing off.

Action log 21.11.22

A number of outstanding actions left on the log, these were discussed, and log updated.

- Risk register action still ongoing, sub-groups need to decide if the risk appetite should be the same across the board or individualised for risks. Discussion about this and resulted in HB suggesting that a risk register review could be a standing agenda item in sub-group meetings. No objections to this.

Action: CN to distribute the updated Action log.

Action: ND to send out the Risk Register to Board and sub-groups.

3: Safeguarding:

TP reported that we don't have any significant cases at the moment. GW and SR have reviewed the ICT workload as referrals are taking longer and requiring more follow up and safeguarding. We are dropping the appointments for counsellors in an evening from five down to four due to this and we are in discussion with commissioners about the trend of increased complexity and risk in referrals.

SC agreed that this trend is a national one and commissioners and providers are discussing how services can continue to accommodate and meet need.

SC commented that it is partly due to the long term impacts of COVID and the contextual safeguarding issues that are still prevalent. TP also suggested that cost of living crisis could also be impacting this.

4. Chief Executive's Summary Report:

AB asked what kind of impact the drop in counselling capacity will have as a result of the more complicated referrals. Will we need to recruit more?

TP explained we are trying to recruit currently, and this has been difficult and even when we do, there is still a lot of training required which takes time. It is also dependent on funding.

AB asked if we are re-negotiating targets from commissioners due to this. TP commented that they are aware, and we are in discussion about this.

HB asked about the allocated funding for the new education role and if this included funds for resources. TP confirmed that we should have what we need as we already have the resources from what we already do in schools. Other things could be identified once the role begins.

AB asked about the two actions for Board approval in the report. TP asked for these to be looked at in the Accounts section of the agenda.

Finance & Business Development Report

AB congratulated on the Dream Beams funding!

DP asked about the staff investigation. Did we follow the investigation through? TP and ND confirmed that we dealt with our external HR advisors on the matter and the policy and procedure were followed throughout. Changes on the CRM have been made to avoid the issue arising in future.

HB asked about the attendance and the staff who have been off with stress. Do we need to follow anything through about this or have a policy? TP confirmed that Employee Assistance Programmes have not been very good in the past and we find that dealing with the cases internally and on an individual basis works better for us. We have also recently brought in additional clinical supervisions for the Wellbeing Team and ICT which is being utilised by those that choose to.

DP asked about training that trustees are required to complete.

CN asked for trustees to either send a GDPR training certificate from their workplace or to attend scheduled training this year. The Board are also required to complete the NSPCC safeguarding Level 1 training online. AB asked about a safeguarding refresher. CN confirmed that this will be done in September but is unsure of dates at the moment.

BB advised that he is available to assist and support with GDPR training/policies if needed.

Therapeutic Services Report

AB asked for comment on the difficulty recruiting people. TP said the main issue is not getting the applications. TP also said we used to recruit from our placements and volunteers but this has been impacted by COVID over the last 18 months, if not more.

DP liked hearing about the Practical Strategies and how that is opening up opportunities in schools. DP asked about the Mental Health Hub replacing the Wellbeing Hub. TP advised SR will know more about the latter question.

AB requested that the Causes for Concern trend cover 12 months rather than from 2019 as it is difficult to see if they are starting to level off.

Action: SR to cover 12-month period on Cause for Concern graph in next report.

5: Chair's Report

AB confirmed that AL has resigned as a trustee and commented that he and TP are actively looking to replace AL. Ideas and recommendations from the Board would be appreciated.

SEG membership and how we chair SEG without AL needs to be discussed and addressed in the next couple of weeks. SC offered the potential to chair SEG, but further discussion is needed. HB also offered her support for this also.

AB raised a concern about Fellowship House due to the costly and large repairs that are needed. What is the lifetime in the building and what do we do about these concerns? ND is in discussions with CE Council (owners) and has raised her concerns. Currently awaiting response but ND has asked about insurance and large repairs such as windows and roof which we don't have the means to fund. AB and AD suggest we review our Business Continuity Plan and Risk Register with regard to this and monitor regularly.

AB thanks FSG and SLT for sorting the pay scales and remuneration. AB proposed a remuneration session once per year for a group of Trustees to look at SLT pay scales, etc. No objections to this. JC agreed it would be a good idea.

Action: TP/IGG to review BCP and Risk Register re: Fellowship House.

Action: AB to put FH and options on agenda for Trustee Development Day.

6: SEG update:

No SEG meeting in January.
No comments or questions.

7: FSG update:

AB commented on the breakdown in terms of the reserves and surplus.

Question: What are our obligations to clear the surplus? TP confirmed we don't have any obligations and the surplus will be used for the salary increases in 2023/24 and the introduction of the new educational role.

HB agreed that if we can justify the surplus, that is all that is needed.

DP commented that our obligation is to manage the surplus effectively which we are doing in FSG. For example, looking at investments and spending it on what we need to (building, salaries etc). This is continually reviewed in FSG.

8. IGG update:

Overview by AD given.

DP asked about audit schedule and the contributions needed from other members of the Board. AD explained we are working on putting some new dates in and then we will allocate certain points to other Board members.

9. Management Accounts & Budgets:

No comments on documents.

Board approval needed for:

- Salary increases for 2023/24
No objections.
DP and AB to contact ND privately about TP increase.
- Budget 2023/24
ND clarified the assumptions on the budget that are not currently confirmed.
 1. Professional Indemnity Insurance – budgeted for 20% increase in cost, although this is unlikely.
 2. HR and Employment Law Advisors – budgeted for new cost which will increase by £120 per month, however we are looking elsewhere to see if we can get a cheaper rate.

No objections.

10. Health & Safety:

No incidents during the period October – December 2022.

One incident in January 2023 – staff member received an electric shock from the microwave in Crewe. The microwave was disposed of and replaced immediately.

Continuing to work on the Health & Safety Guidance document.

Fire risk assessment actions are nearly complete.

11. Policies & Procedures:

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

DP asked if Equality Act 2010 needed to be referenced at the bottom. TP to look into this.

No objections.

Action: to be signed off by AB.

12. Energy Renewal discussion

Our contract needs to be renewed in April 2023 and we need to make a decision. The increase will be large (approximately 300%). A decision is needed as to whether ND can have authority to approve and sign a new contract.

DP asked about any relief / support we are entitled to. DP found information during meeting to suggest the Energy Bill Relief Scheme has been extended until March 31st, 2024.

CN to look into this.

AB commented that now the budget has been approved, ND has authority to proceed within the scope of the budget. No objections from the Board.

13. Strategy/Development & Objectives

No comments.

Action: AB to work on agenda for development day in April.

14. Risk Register:

- Fellowship House (premises) risk needs to be reviewed and updated.

- Raise likelihood of 'Broad skill set and/or time commitment' until we have recruited to replace AL. No objections.

Action: IGG /TP to update risk register and Business Continuity Plan.

AOB:

DP impressed with the new external newsletter!

Date of next meeting: 22nd May 2023

All meetings 6.00pm unless otherwise stated.

Venue: via Zoom

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A Brabban".

Position: Andrew Brabban, Chair of Trustees

Date: 26th May 2023